Queer and Now: On Etty's 'Autobiography' (1849) and 'Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched' (c. 1830)

Jason Edwards

William Etty's life and works have always been controversial. Commentators have been surprisingly spiteful, for nearly two hundred years, about the painter's lifelong devotion to the Royal Academy's life drawing school, whilst critics of Etty's canvases, in his lifetime and since his death, have described them as 'offensive and indecent',[1] believed that they alluded to 'disgusting subject[s]';[2] and claimed that they sought to 'seduce' their viewers into lifestyles that could 'gratify only the most vicious taste' for 'dirty flesh'.[3]

During the painter's lifetime, as Sarah Burnage's essay in this catalogue makes clear, viewers tended to be affronted mostly by Etty's frank depictions of female flesh. Commentators tended to characterise the painter's male nudes, by contrast, as praiseworthy, mainstream academic figures worthy of emulation. Today, however, it is Etty's male nudes that tend to cause the controversy, and particularly the 'private' studies of male bodies that the painter engaged with across his career.

In this essay, I consider in detail one of Etty's many nude male studies: the posthumously-titled *Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched* (fig. 44; cat. 72) of around 1830 that can today be found in the collections of York Art Gallery, and that represents the institution's best-selling postcard. Because of the notable silence around Etty's male nude figures in the extant scholarship on the painter, especially in comparison to the voluminous scholarship on Etty's female nudes, I examine the canvas in unusually close detail. Indeed, the second part of this essay represents an extended 'close reading' of the image in terms of its facture, choice of model, the unusual position of the figure, and its many, perhaps unexpected erotic resonances. I contextualise my reading of the *Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched* with a detailed engagement with Etty's autobiographical writings and some of the biographies and other critical writings on the painter.

My interpretations of Etty's life and work in this essay might initially appear somewhat *perverse*, at least by more conventional art-historical standards, and perverse in a number of senses of the word: as deliberately flying in the face of what a supposed majority of more conventional scholars might deem right, reasonable or acceptable; as contrary to the evidence, at least as certain other viewers might be inclined to interpret it; and as perverse, in a sexual sense, as deliberately turning away from more familiar understandings of artistic eroticism, in favour of a range of practices that many readers,

illiam Etty
as
–30
.7 x 47 cm
RAG: 74)
equest 1924

curators, scholars or viewers might consider unlikely or even unacceptable sources of physical pleasure.

In adopting this perverse stance, however, my essay draws on two decades or more of scholarship within art history, and the humanities more generally, known by its exponents as 'queer theory'. This is a body of writing which prides itself on refusing conventional notions of sexuality as defined by reproductive heterosexual intercourse, and limited to it, in favour of any number of other, supposedly less mainstream erotic practices, with a particular emphasis upon male and female homosexuality and upon practices identified with individuals and sexual communities interested in bondage, domination and sadomasochism.

My essay draws particular inspiration from the work of three founding and still influential figures within queer theory: from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's celebration of male-male anal eroticism and use of an explicitly autobiographical first person;[4] from Michael Moon's account of the diverse and potentially perverse pleasures associated with the mouth[5] and from Jonathan Goldberg's understandings and celebrations of 'sodomy', as a historical and contemporary category that did not and does not differentiate between a number of behaviours outside of the supposed mainstream of reproductive heterosexuality, such as oral sex, anal sex, sex with people of the same gender or with multiple participants, and sex across the supposedly discrete lines of species.[6]

Inspired, deeply energised and profoundly encouraged by the writings of Goldberg, Sedgwick and Moon, in the arguments that follow I examine through a celebratory lens, rather than write from a position that seeks to pass negative judgement on so-called queer sexualities Etty's *Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched,* the painter's own accounts of his lifestyle and practice as a painter, and subsequent scholarly reflections upon Etty's life, letters and works. Be warned or tantalised: the readings that follow are self-consciously perverse, and may remind you why Etty has been, and continues to be, such a controversial painter.

'Le Petite Mort', or Why Etty was Not Left on the Life School Shelf

To date, scholars have tended to read William Etty's 1849 'Autobiography' straight, as an example of sincere revelation, rather than strategic self-construction, even though the painter is explicit about the fact that his story is designed to be a 'useful lesson' to his 'younger brethren of art'.[7] For example, Etty's first biographer, Alexander Gilchrist described the 'Autobiography' as 'transparent' and 'guileless';[8] whilst the artist's mid-twentieth-century apologists, William Gaunt and F. Gordon Roe, characterised Etty's memoirs as a 'perfectly sincere' document proving that there was 'no trace of immoral sentiment' in the painter's work.[9] Written shortly after Etty had sought to introduce male models into the York School of Design – an incident which he feared would cause a 'scandal' and may have raised a 'mob' – Etty's published writings reveal a painter who

was so profoundly 'mistrustful' of his audience that he felt it necessary to write an 'Autobiography' to persuade them of his moral probity.[10]

That said, and when read with a 'queer eye' for a supposedly straight guy, there is plenty of evidence, even from Gilchrist's mid-Victorian, 1855 biography of the painter, to suggest that the Royal Academy life school, where commentators characteristically suggest that a repressed and lonely Etty wasted most of his adult life, was a deliciously multi-sensory, erotically-embodied experience for the painter and his peers. For example, Gilchrist evokes both the rich olfactory experience of Etty's painterly medium of turpentine, linseed oil and lead; and the intimate, aural experience of the artist 'talking in whispers' to his fellow students.[11] We should also consider the aroma of the bodies of the hot, gas-lit male models at the life class that Etty described as his 'only sunshine' in the bleak fog of London.[12] We might speculate upon the potentially homoerotic intimacy of Etty and his youthful peers, pressed together in the 'restricted space of the seats' in the Academy Life class, as the painter leant over to borrow from the comparatively 'well-supplied palette of some neighbouring student, who always seemed to think it a compliment'.[13] And rather than characterising the life school as academic, in the pejorative sense – as something staid, conservative and formal – we might imagine its hothouse, all-male environment, with its perspiring naked models, posed for the students' delectation, as more akin to the Turkish baths Etty was 'wont to frequent' – for his rheumatism, according to Gilchrist – but whose queer erotic possibilities are no less worthy of mention.[14]

In addition, since Etty himself often employed 'two or three models a day' of both genders, for an 'hour or two each', we might characterise the painter as a kind of endlessly arousable artist who was hot-foot in search of any number of briefly-glimpsed beauties in the 'streets' and 'fields';[15] as a painter who became adept at 'perfecting the discovery' of, and 'opening a negotiation' with potential models; and who gave 'unusually active chase in all kinds of places', 'running breathless' through the streets from Westminster to Kensington, at the cost of 'no small' potential 'pain' and 'embarrassment'.[16] There is also something potentially suggestive about Gilchrist's revelation that Etty found some of his male models in the 'baths he was wont to frequent', and also in the fact that he picked up a 'strapping Life-Guardsmen' or two for the same purpose, presumably close to the barracks around St. James's Park, a notorious gay cruising ground just a few decades later.[17] In addition, rather than characterising Etty as an unattractive, melancholy, perverse loner, as commentators have been wont to do, whose 'devotion' to the life school 'certainly shortened *his* life', in Gilchrist's cruel, jokey assessment,[18] and whose 'odd behaviour' supposedly 'amazed and scandalised' his peers, in Gaunt's;[19] we might emphasise the 'distress' many metropolitan models felt when Etty moved to York, who felt as if they had 'lost their best friend'.[20] We might also recall Etty's fellow students' sense that the life school 'shelf for studies' felt 'unnatural' without him upon it.[21] And who can blame them? After all, as Etty documented, the 'contact and collision' of the various Academy

students, 'living in daily contact' at the life school, elicited 'electric sparks and fire' as their 'offspring'.[22]

And, as in the studies for his art, so in his life was Etty not left on the shelf. For instance, rather than trusting the spiteful Brian J. Bailey regarding Etty's supposedly 'pathetic' 'decision' in 1830 to remain single[23] as an example of the painter making the best of a bad lot, we could listen to what Etty actually said about what James Melvin Biggins equally ungenerously and unimaginatively described as the painter's 'lonely bachelor's life'.[24] Etty felt that it was 'best' that he had 'not married' because, as a result, he did not have to put up with 'noisy children' on a daily basis, and could spend his disposable income and time in the preferable company of 'nice Books and Pictures'. Etty also surrounded himself with cats, rabbits, pigeons and other animal companions whose low critical status amongst Etty's biographers makes no conceptual sense outside of a questionably conventional belief that people are always more important and sustaining than pets.[25]

Sweets for My Sweet? On Etty's Birds and Bees

In the place of the repeated claims, by commentators, that Etty was repressed throughout his life, it might also be worth emphasising how unusually embodied and erotic discussions of 'taste' are in the painter's account of the aesthetic.[26] For instance, the simultaneous, multisensory appeal of Etty's oeuvre is, perhaps, powerfully indicated by the way in which he repeatedly characterised 'good taste', in artworks, in relation to the oral and olfactory experience of honeybees. For example, Etty described himself as 'sucking [...] the sweets of the Venetian school' like a bee.[27] Scholars have not always been as content as John Constable to have Etty's aesthetic cake and eat it, who, 'smacking his lips', described how some of Etty's canvases were so delectable 'you might eat' them.[28] Some commentators *have* clearly relished the experience of 'sucking the sweets' of his work, like boys with their faces pressed up against the glass of the confectioner's window, or like the painter's peers who sat down with him to enjoy a *'petite verre* of Maraschino'.[29] For example, one described Etty's facture as 'sweetly coloured', another praised his 'thick, whipped up impasto'.[30] Many other scholars, however, did not, and do not possess a sufficiently sweet tooth to enjoy, fully or sustainedly, the aesthetic experiences Etty offers. William Holman Hunt found that Etty's pictures 'cloyed' his 'taste with their sweetness'.[31] Gilchrist criticised the 'glutinous appetite' of Etty's dealers;[32] Dennis Farr noted that Etty's 'oversweet sentiment' was not to 'modern taste';[33] whilst Gaunt criticised the 'undigested or indigestible sentiment' of Etty's 'simper[ing]', 'insipid mawkishness'.[34] In short, many scholars, keen to put away Etty's supposedly childish love of sweet things, have characterised his work to be in 'bad', if not the 'worst possible taste'.[35] In response to such an 'abusive reception',[36] I can only reply, with Mae West, that sometimes too much of a good thing is a good thing, and, with Andrea True, that I want more, more, more. I know how *I* like it.

And yet, if I am unable to resist sucking on an Etty, so to speak, perhaps the defining feature of scholarship on the painter, as I have already indicated, is its unusually critical character. Indeed, with friends like his commentators, Etty has scarcely needed enemies. Gilchrist pointed to the painter's 'faults and shortcomings',[37] Hunt criticised Etty's 'tawdry taste',[38] whilst Farr bemoaned his 'winsome', 'gaudy', 'over-crowded compositions', and 'vulgar theatricality'.[39] In addition, and perhaps more unusually, Gilchrist, in the context of Etty's supposed inability to attract a spouse, described the painter as 'slovenly in attire', 'short and awkward in body', and what a 'young lady' would call 'a sight', because of his long head, large jaw, hands and feet; long, wild, sandy hair; and face marked with small-pox. Indeed, Gilchrist spitefully summarises Etty as 'one of the oddest looking creatures' imaginable.[40]

The Innocent Are Gay?[41]

If it has, then, been historically 'easy to scoff' at Etty's physical, erotic and aesthetic 'defects',[42] to be a 'self-righteous judge' and to be 'wise or liberal' at Etty's 'expense',[43] I think that we must work harder to resist the temptation to fall into what Gilchrist characterises as the 'sleep-walking criticism' of his and our day.[44] After all, keeping the queer theoretical work of Moon, Sedgwick and Goldberg in mind, we may align ourselves perhaps more kindly and effectively with what Gilchrist calls the 'stupidity' and 'baseness' of Etty's apparently erotically-fixated audience,[45] with their 'improper', 'uncultivated', 'brutish' or insanely 'vile notions' and 'nasty ideas' about his art.[46] After all, the less powerful and palatable alternative is to identify ourselves with the 'prudish' or – 'which is the same thing, – prurient', 'prejudice' of Etty's more erotophobic and homophobic scholars, with their 'veneer of modesty'. They are prepared to be conventionally, publicly and continually shocked by images whose erotic possibilities they recognise full well, but disavow anew each time, by making those desires invisible or unspeakable. This was a logic simultaneously fearful of the erotic, and especially the homoerotic, that Etty himself recognised when he recommended sarcastically that 'sensitive ladies' should not 'bestow a stray glance' on even their own fair forms for 'fear of contamination'.[47] In addition, and in constantly imagining that we can diagnose Etty's foibles from a supposedly objective, critical distance, and thereby reckoning ourselves wiser than Etty in his own life and work, and 'not as in the attitude of learners *there*', 'we are strangely his inferiors', rather than he ours.[48] After all, what kind of viewers are we, if we can't come to understand and appreciate what Gilchrist describes as Etty's insistently 'gay creation'?[49]

Keeping this in mind, and noting the prevalence of the adjective 'gay' in Gilchrist's descriptions of Etty's life and work,[50] I want, in the next section, to shift emphasis from the sweet to the salty and the dirty, by considering the ways in which Etty's may be not merely a 'gay' aesthetic, but a *sodomitic* one. In order to make this argument, I turn to Etty's *Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched.*

The "Most Indiscriminate of Appetites",[51] *or Sodomising William Etty*

To date, scholars have offered rather summary interpretations of Etty's *Male Nude, with Arms Up-Stretched.*[52] In what follows, I speculate more precisely than most commentators have been willing or able to do on some of the potentially 'perverse' erotic sources of the canvas's appeal, beginning from the presumption that any commentary that insists on the aesthetic, rather than erotic character of the image, and that does not include homoerotic possibilities risks homophobia.[53] After all, at the most basic level, the *Male Nude* clearly articulates a softcore sadomasochism. And I say 'softcore' because, in spite of the model's strategically hidden genitals, Etty offers a hint of pubic hair through the slight tint of black paint he adds just beneath the model's belly button, whose palette chimes with the hair elsewhere on his face, head and body. The *Male Nude*'s facture also gives its subject a clear tactile and oral appeal. On close inspection, Etty's brushstrokes lovingly follow the direction of his model's calves and thighs, encouraging the eye to follow, whilst viewers might find themselves hungry to taste the whipped, creamy or butter-icing thick facture found on his stomach and in the patch of drapery immediately to the left of his head. Indeed, there may be something characteristically and deliciously 'cakey' about the way in which Etty layers his creamy-white paint over a 'thin brown underpainting', as we have seen.[54]

The *Male Nude* also communicates a potentially powerful nipple eroticism. That is thanks to the way in which Etty extends a square brush's worth of flesh-toned paint into the aureole of his model's right nipple, thereby suggesting the intimate overlap of nipple and skin; and to the way in which Etty echoes and extends the colour of his model's left nipple down the contour line of his left side and on his model's face and feet. As elsewhere in Etty's aesthetic, as we have again already seen, olfaction is also at the heart of the *Male Nude*, indicated by the model's Rubens-red-articulated right nostrils, pulling up and away from the scent of his genitals, but into the aroma of his left armpit.

The *Male Nude* also raises further questions of aesthetic and erotic *orientation.* It is especially suggestive, for instance, to imaginatively rotate the canvas ninety degrees anticlockwise (fig. 45; cat. 72). We might be encouraged to perform such an exercise by the horizontally-oriented male nudes regularly found elsewhere in Etty's work. In addition, like the similarly-prone *Prometheus,* with his pierced Saint Sebastian- or Christ-like penetrated body, the right palm of the *Male Nude* also appears to reveal a stigmata; whilst his lower body, from this angle and like *Leander*'s, in the canvas, *Hero, Having Thrown herself from the Tower at the Sight of Leander Drowned, Dies on His Body* (cat. 8), seems lapped by waves and his upper body apparently showered within a waterfall of insistently liquid paint that splashes his right thigh and buttock and spumes between his left calf and foot.

We might also be inclined to imaginitively rotate the canvas in this way by the shifting visual orientations Etty's sketchbooks repeatedly encourage, as they volley

Fig. 45. (Cat. 72.) William Etty
Male Nude, with Arms Up Stretched
(rotated ninety degrees anti-clockwise)
c. 1828–30, oil on millboard,
59.7 x 47 cm
York Art Gallery (YORAG: 74)
Sir Claude Phillips Bequest 1924

between portrait and landscape formats; and by the many sheets of his drawings, which simultaneously offer recto and verso views.[55] Indeed, in some ways, the rotated image makes as good, if not more pictorial sense. After all, the relaxed, supported stretch of the model's upper back, fleshy right shoulder, limp upper arms and wrists, as well as the slackness of the ribbons around his left wrist, all make greater sense if the model is lying on the ground, with his upper back, the back of his arms and palms resting on the floor, rather than having to hold himself rigidly in a difficult vertical pose. Similarly, whilst it is difficult to make sense of the brown paint to the middle far left of the painting in a vertical orientation, except, perhaps, as an awkwardly rendered sketch of a chair, from a horizontal perspective it more clearly resembles supporting cushions.

From this horizontal angle, a powerful image of anal sex emerges from the canvas. I make this claim because, from the horizontal orientation, the model seems posed, and poised in readiness for the receptive position of 'missionary anal' sex, in which the 'passive' partner reclines on his back, with his lower back and bottom often supported by and raised up on cushions, whilst extending his legs up his partner vertically, with his feet resting upon either his chest or shoulders. The model's relaxed upper body, ecstatically thrown back head and blushing face all resonate powerfully in this position, suggesting the moments of self-conscious relaxation required to enable the most comfortable, least painful phallic penetration of the anus, and the pleasures of passive abandonment.

And yet, like a number of Etty's history paintings, the *Male Nude* places into dialectic relation a powerful eroticism and an equally powerful morality. I make this claim because of the way in which Etty suggestively identifies the model's right calf,

ankle and foot with a pig's trotter. By indicating the transformation of the model's flesh into pork, the canvas suggests the male nude's gustatory appeal, and recalls both Circe's transformation of Ulysses's sailors into swine, and a scene in Milton's *Comus* that preoccupied Etty, according to Gilchrist. This was the one describing how the 'sensual grovellers', 'when their vices had reduced them to swine', could not 'perceive their foul disfigurement', but 'boast[ed] themselves more comely than before'.[56] Etty does not just conflate his model with pork. When viewed horizontally, the male nude's pose also resembles trussed poultry, making it a kind of meat-laden, *memento mori*, Dutch still life, and bringing the canvas into close relation with a cluster of works including Etty's *Still Life with Dead Pheasant and Fruit* (fig. 46) and the numerous drawings of pigs heads, legs and trotters juxtaposed with human faces in Etty's sketchbooks.[57] And yet, Etty also suggests that his model's body should be loved and cared for, because of the way in which, from the vertical orientation, his pose echoes that of Christ's body in the deposition; and because, particularly as laid horizontally against the thick swirls of creamy- and browny-white facture, and with his relaxed legs in a position where they could be lifted up easily to reveal his bottom, the model brings to mind images of diapering an infant.

In juxtaposing these various scenes, Etty articulates a powerfully non-aversive, potentially loving relation to the passive body and the behind. The canvas also challenges

Fig. 46. William Etty
Still Life with Dead Pheasant and Fruit
c. 1840s, oil on paper on millboard
45.4 x 37.3 cm
York Art Gallery (YORAG: 81)
Presented by Mrs E.R. Challoner 1946

Gaunt's belief that Etty's pictorial eroticism was the product of a 'modern', 'scientific' 'spirit of enquiry'. Indeed, the *Male Nude* suggests that Gaunt was closer to the mark when he asserted that the canvas had an 'unmistakeable, 'early Victorian', 'period flavour'.[58] I would characterise this flavour as *sodomitical* because Etty's pictorial eroticism embraces, rather than differentiates between, in Goldberg's phrase, the various 'sites upon which sodomy fastens':[59] between the human and animal, active and passive, masculine and feminine; between the insertive and receptive, front and back; between the oral, visual, tactile, anal, phallic and olfactory; as well as between the classical and Christian, sensuous and moral. Significantly, however, Etty's male nudes do not characteristically bring 'forced entries' into sodomy's orbit; and, in so doing, powerfully articulate a significantly under-imagined category: what Goldberg calls 'consensual sodomy'.[60] In addition, Etty's *Male Nude* usefully demonstrates that sodomy is not, as many of the painter's Victorian peers would claim, exclusively the 'vice of Mediterranean/Islamic cultures',[61] but, rather, at the heart of the Royal Academy and working-class and imperial, British masculinity. I make this claim because, if this model is not named, as is the case with the painter's studies of Guardsman Higgins, Etty suggests the model's probable class and professional identity as a now retired soldier, boxer or wrestler by the way in which he combines the touch of white-grey in the model's hair with the thick facture with which he under-articulates the whorls of the nude's 'boxed' or 'cauliflower' ears. In addition, the 'stigmata' in the model's right palm, and suggestively 'deposed' pose, on a y-shaped thieves' cross, used for the execution of criminals in Roman Judea, perhaps acknowledges the Academy students' reliance, for their anatomical training, on the bodies of convicted criminals, as well as a sense of New Testament forgiveness to offset the image's otherwise vengefully anti-erotic, Old-Testament and divine-classical morality.

Coming Out as a Sodomite? Coming Out as an Etty-Lover

For obvious reasons, Etty did not, and could not come out as a sodomite in his 'Autobiography'. Firstly, because it would have been career suicide and involved familial, institutional and social isolation. Secondly, because, as historian of sexuality Michel Foucault made clear, in Etty's period sodomy was imagined to be a 'temporary aberration', a 'category of forbidden acts', rather than a coherent identity that was widely identified with.[62] And finally, because, as Goldberg makes clear, sodomy named sexual acts only in 'stigmatising contexts', rather than more pleasurable ones where 'such acts went on all the time', and where they 'might be called something else, or nothing at all'.[63]

And yet, taking advantage of the fact that viewers ran the risk of appearing to be the thing they described if they pointed to the potentially perverse meanings of his male nudes, Etty does seem to have come out repeatedly and quite powerfully as a sodomite in his work.[64] And writing from an explicitly queer-theoretical perspective from York in

Fig. 47. (Cat. 38.)
William Etty
Sketch of Damned Figure from the Last Judgement,
Sistine Chapel, after Michelangelo, 1822
Pencil on paper, 24 x 12 cm
York Art Gallery
(YORAG: 2005.406)
Purchased 1928

2010, I have been suggesting that Etty is a unique part of the city's queer history and visual culture, of what William Camidge calls York's 'queenly dowry'.[65]

But, pointing to the perverse possibilities of Etty's oeuvre may not represent the greatest challenge his work could pose to contemporary art historiography. For many art historians, Etty remains the eminent early Victorian whose controversial work still cannot be assimilated into the canon, not because it is erotically risqué, but because it is imagined to be so embarrassingly kitsch and excruciatingly bad. And so, coming out as an Etty scholar, as I am doing here, runs the risk of being identified as someone with risible taste.

With this in mind, Brian J. Bailey suggested, in the mid-1970s, that curators should 'take down all those concessions to early Victorian taste' with which Etty 'earned his keep', and 'hang instead the splendid studies that made his life worth living': those 'brilliantly [...] alive' bodies he painted 'for their own sakes' in which spectators can feel the 'warm blood of humanity flowing through their veins'.[66] But, in a context in which 'Victorian-bashing' remains *de rigeur* for anyone with serious art-historical pretensions, it may be that it is not Etty's male nudes that we need most to bring out of the closet of British art, but his still widely-ridiculed history and Orientalist paintings, and precisely because they are so unpalatable to contemporary taste.[67]

After all, in responding to these works with what Sedgwick might characterise as 'ostentatious disgust',[68] it may be viewers contemporary with us, rather than our Victorian predecessors, who will ultimately be found lacking. That is because, in the period in question, sentimentality, rather than being a sign of 'pathetic weakness', was a subject of 'high ethical and aesthetic praise'; and because, as Sedgwick again makes clear, sentimentality and kitsch have been central over the past two or more centuries to the caricatures of women and gay men and their own self-constructions.[69] Any slighting of Etty's 'undigested or indigestible sentiment', then, of his 'ineffable girlishness', and 'simper[ing]', 'insipid mawkishness',[70] may not just reveal a critic's poor aesthetic judgement; it might also leave the recognisably bad taste of internalised misogyny and homophobia in his or her mouth.

I should like to thank Sarah Burnage for her friendship and intelligence; Michael Moon for his infectious enthusiasm; Victoria Coulson, for talking meat, and much else, with me; and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, still the warp and weft of my thinking.

1 Farr, p. 31.
2 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 62l.
Farr, p. 78.
3 Farr, p. 31.
4 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *A Dialogue on Love,* (Boston, 1999).
5 Michael Moon, 'Oralia: Hunger for Women's Performances in Joseph Cornell's Boxes and Diaries', *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory,* 8.2 (1996), pp. 39–59.
6 Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities,* 1992; Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2002; and Jonathan Goldberg, ed., *Reclaiming Sodom,* (London, 1994).
7 Etty, 'Autobiography', p. 37.

8 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 90, 253, 267.
9 William Gaunt and F. Gordon Roe, *Etty and the Nude,* (Leigh-on-Sea, 1943), p. 22.
10 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 257, 285.
11 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 27, 187, 241.
12 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 181–82.
13 Gilchrist, vol. 1, p. 187.
14 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 137, 221. For more on the queer contexts of Turkish bathing, see John Potvin, 'Vapour and Steam: The Victorian Bath, Homosocial Health and Male Bodies on Display', *Journal of Design History* 18.4 (Winter 2005), pp. 319–33.
15 Etty, p. 37.
16 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 206–7.
17 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 23, 45, 77, 137, 145, 206–7, 253. For more on the cultural geography of gay London, see Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914,* (Cambridge, 2008).
18 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 260.
19 Gaunt and Roe, p. 22.
20 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 253.
21 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 253.
22 Etty, p. 37.
23 Brian J. Bailey, *William Etty's Nudes,* (Bedford, 1974), p. 24.
24 James Melvin Biggins, *Etty and York,* (York, 1949), p. 6.
25 Bailey, pp. 19, 24; Farr, p. 22; Gilchrist, vol.2, pp. 26–27.
26 Bailey suggests that Etty's "sheltered upbringing clearly prevented him from forming a fruitful relationship", that the painter was "fascinated by women, but afraid of them", and that Etty was "not entirely at ease with a nude model in his studio" (pp. 16, 25).
27 Etty, p. 37; Gilchrist, vol. 1, pp. 158–59.
28 Farr, p. 77; Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 60.
29 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 193, 241.
30 Gilchrist., vol. 2, p. 191; Farr, p. 85.
31 Cited in Farr, p. 109.
32 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 159.
33 Farr, p. 52.
34 Gaunt and Roe, p. 21.
35 Farr, p. 78; Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 62, 320.
36 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 99.
37 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 316.
38 Farr, p. 109.
39 Farr, pp. 1, 7, 19, 29–30, 89.
40 Gilchrist, vol. 1, p. 136.
41 I derive my subtitle from Etty's 1842 canvas, *The Innocent are Gay.*
42 Farr, p. 30.
43 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 303.
44 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 45.
45 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 325;
46 Gaunt, p. 67; Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 323, 325.
47 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 63, 129, 132, 323, 325.
48 Gilchrist, vol. 2, pp. 323, 325.
49 Gilchrist, vol. 1, p. 278.
50 See Gilchrist, vol. 1, pp. 94; 2: pp. 175–76, 221, 243, 288.
51 W. Cosmo Monkhouse, *Pictures by William Etty,* (London, 1874), p. 2.
52 See Farr, pp. 45, 57; and Ilaria Bignamini and Martin Postle, *The Artist's Model from Lely to Etty,* (Nottingham, 1991), pp. 46–47.
53 My assertion here draws on Sedgwick's axiomatic claim that 'an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition' (*Epistemology of the Closet,* Los Angeles: California University Press, 1990, 1).
54 Farr, p. 82.
55 Gaunt asserts that of the 650 works in Etty's studio at his death, around 100 were "painted on both sides" (p. 72). For more on

the potential phallic and anal possibilities of the 'recto' and 'verso', see Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 35–67.

56 Gilchrist, vol. 2, p. 51.

57 For examples, see 2005.496.23a and 2005.496.10 in the York collections.

58 Gaunt, p. 20.

59 Goldberg, *Sodometries*, p. xvi.

60 Goldberg, pp. 1, 7.

61 Goldberg, p .3.

62 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, New York: Pantheon, 1978; I: p. 43.

63 Goldberg, p. 19.

64 For more on the powerful projective symmetries of the phrase 'it takes one to know one', see Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, p. 225.

65 Camidge, p. 1.

66 Bailey, pp. 44, 47.

67 Gaunt, p. 21.

68 Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, p. 142.

69 Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, p. 150.

70 Gaunt, p. 21.